

standard instrument approach procedure being used; and

(3) Except for Category II or Category III approaches where any necessary visual reference requirements are specified by the authorization of the Administrator, at least one of the following visual references for the intended runway is distinctly visible and identifiable to the pilot:

(i) The approach light system, except that the pilot may not descend below 100 feet above the touchdown zone elevation using the approach lights as a reference unless the red terminating bars or the red side row bars are also distinctly visible and identifiable.

(ii) The threshold.

(iii) The threshold markings.

(iv) The threshold lights.

(v) The runway end identifier lights.

(vi) The visual approach slope indicator.

(vii) The touchdown zone or touchdown zone markings.

(viii) The touchdown zone lights.

(ix) The runway or runway markings.

(x) The runway lights.

(e) For the purpose of this section, the final approach segment begins at the final approach fix or facility prescribed in the instrument approach procedure. When a final approach fix is not prescribed for a procedure that includes a procedure turn, the final approach segment begins at the point where the procedure turn is completed and the aircraft is established inbound toward the airport on the final approach course within the distance prescribed in the procedure.

(f) Unless otherwise authorized in the certificate holder's operations specifications, each pilot making an IFR takeoff, approach, or landing at a foreign airport shall comply with the applicable instrument approach procedures and weather minimums prescribed by the authority having jurisdiction over the airport.

[Doc. No. 20060, 46 FR 2291, Jan. 8, 1981, as amended by Amdt. 121–303, 69 FR 1641, Jan. 9, 2004; Amdt. 121–333, 72 FR 31682, June 7, 2007]

§ 121.652 Landing weather minimums: IFR: All certificate holders.

(a) If the pilot in command of an airplane has not served 100 hours as pilot in command in operations under this

part in the type of airplane he is operating, the MDA or DA/DH and visibility landing minimums in the certificate holder's operations specification for regular, provisional, or refueling airports are increased by 100 feet and one-half mile (or the RVR equivalent). The MDA or DA/DH and visibility minimums need not be increased above those applicable to the airport when used as an alternate airport, but in no event may the landing minimums be less than 300 and 1. However, a Pilot in command employed by a certificate holder conducting operations in large aircraft under part 135 of this chapter, may credit flight time acquired in operations conducted for that operator under part 91 in the same type airplane for up to 50 percent of the 100 hours of pilot in command experience required by this paragraph.

(b) The 100 hours of pilot in command experience required by paragraph (a) of this section may be reduced (not to exceed 50 percent) by substituting one landing in operations under this part in the type of airplane for 1 required hour of pilot in command experience, if the pilot has at least 100 hours as pilot in command of another type airplane in operations under this part.

(c) Category II minimums and the sliding scale when authorized in the certificate holder's operations specifications do not apply until the pilot in command subject to paragraph (a) of this section meets the requirements of that paragraph in the type of airplane he is operating.

[Doc. No. 7594, 33 FR 10843, July 31, 1968, as amended by Amdt. 121–143, 43 FR 22642, May 25, 1978; Amdt. 121–253, 61 FR 2615, Jan. 26, 1996; Amdt. 121–333, 72 FR 31682, June 7, 2007]

§ 121.653 [Reserved]

§ 121.655 Applicability of reported weather minimums.

In conducting operations under §§121.649 through 121.653, the ceiling and visibility values in the main body of the latest weather report control for VFR and IFR takeoffs and landings and for instrument approach procedures on all runways of an airport. However, if the latest weather report, including an oral report from the control tower, contains a visibility value specified as

runway visibility or runway visual range for a particular runway of an airport, that specified value controls for VFR and IFR landings and takeoffs and straight-in instrument approaches for that runway.

§ 121.657 Flight altitude rules.

(a) *General.* Notwithstanding § 91.119 or any rule applicable outside the United States, no person may operate an aircraft below the minimums set forth in paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section, except when necessary for takeoff or landing, or except when, after considering the character of the terrain, the quality and quantity of meteorological services, the navigational facilities available, and other flight conditions, the Administrator prescribes other minimums for any route or part of a route where he finds that the safe conduct of the flight requires other altitudes. Outside of the United States the minimums prescribed in this section are controlling unless higher minimums are prescribed in the certificate holder's operations specifications or by the foreign country over which the aircraft is operating.

(b) *Day VFR operations.* No certificate holder conducting domestic operations may operate a passenger-carrying aircraft and no certificate holder conducting flag or supplemental operations may operate any aircraft under VFR during the day at an altitude less than 1,000 feet above the surface or less than 1,000 feet from any mountain, hill, or other obstruction to flight.

(c) *Night VFR, IFR, and over-the-top operations.* No person may operate an aircraft under IFR including over-the-top or at night under VFR at an altitude less than 1,000 feet above the highest obstacle within a horizontal distance of five miles from the center of the intended course, or, in designated mountainous areas, less than 2,000 feet above the highest obstacle within a horizontal distance of five miles from the center of the intended course.

(d) *Day over-the-top operations below minimum en route altitudes.* A person may conduct day over-the-top operations in an airplane at flight altitudes lower than the minimum en route IFR altitudes if—

(1) The operation is conducted at least 1,000 feet above the top of lower broken or overcast cloud cover;

(2) The top of the lower cloud cover is generally uniform and level;

(3) Flight visibility is at least five miles; and

(4) The base of any higher broken or overcast cloud cover is generally uniform and level and is at least 1,000 feet above the minimum en route IFR altitude for that route segment.

[Doc. No. 6258, 29 FR 19222, Dec. 31, 1964, as amended by Amdt. 121-144, 43 FR 22649, May 25, 1978; Amdt. 121-206, 54 FR 34331, Aug. 18, 1989; Amdt. 121-253, 61 FR 2615, Jan. 26, 1996]

§ 121.659 Initial approach altitude: Domestic and supplemental operations.

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, when making an initial approach to a radio navigation facility under IFR, no person may descend an aircraft below the pertinent minimum altitude for initial approach (as specified in the instrument approach procedure for that facility) until his arrival over that facility has been definitely established.

(b) When making an initial approach on a flight being conducted under § 121.657(d), no pilot may commence an instrument approach until his arrival over the radio facility has definitely been established. In making an instrument approach under these circumstances no person may descend an aircraft lower than 1,000 feet above the top of the lower cloud or the minimum altitude determined by the Administrator for that part of the IFR approach, whichever is lower.

§ 121.661 Initial approach altitude: Flag operations.

When making an initial approach to a radio navigation facility under IFR, no person may descend below the pertinent minimum altitude for initial approach (as specified in the instrument approach procedure for that facility) until his arrival over that facility has been definitely established.